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great buildings, chariots, horses, and cattle, and that it was a land full of people, and that thither came the travellers of all nations to buy and sell; whether we regard it as the patron and originator of the kindred arts of sculpture, architecture, and painting—for the researches of modern times have abundantly proved, that while Europe and the western world were yet in a state of primeval barbarism, Egypt possessed imperial palaces, vast sepulchres, and noble temples; or whether we consider it simply as the land of Ham, the son of Noah, our wonder at the achievements of its people, our interest in its history, our recollection of the influence it has had in the civilization and refinement of the world, become only greater, more absorbing, and more intense.

Were we to pursue this train of thought, we might speedily loose ourself in the mazes of the past, and wander blindfold amid the mysteries of monuments, and sepulchre, and palace, and desert; but a glance at the picture brings us at once to the banks of the old Nile, and to the subject we have before us—the Wild Animals peculiar to Egypt.

The valley of the Nile is everywhere, on both sides of the stream, covered with the remains of Egypt's departed magnificence, especially where the river forms the famous Delta; and the past still lives in the ruined temple of Carnac and the desolated plains in which the pyramids still stand, the wonder of mankind. But while all is changed, and while Egypt among the nations is considered but a third or fourth rate power, the natural characteristics of the country remain the same. The Nile still annually overflows its banks, and fertilises the surrounding plains; the sands of those apparently interminable deserts over which the Israelites of old pursued their weary way, still rise in burning clouds to terrify and overwhelm the traveller; the corn and the fig-tree still grow in the rich valleys and on the steep hill sides as they did when the brethren of Joseph went thither from the famine-stricken tents of Israel. The men who built the pyramids have departed, and none are acquainted even with their names; but the pyramids remain, silent and grey and desolate as of old. The divine spirit of the great architects has fled away, but the work of their hands remaineth. The Nile flows down from the mountains to the sea, just as it did when the daughter of Pharaoh discovered the child Moses floating on its surface, cradled in a little ark of bulrushes; and the wild animals come down nightly now to quench their thirst in its waters even as they did then. Man only has changed.

In the oldest written record,—the Book of Job, "all people's book," as Carlyle emphatically styles it,—reference is made to the animals through whom God declareth his power—the wild goats and hinds, the wild ass, the unicorn, the peacock, the ostrich, the horse, the hawk, the eagle, the crocodile, and the hippopotamus. See how eloquently and how truly the sacred writer describes the latter animal:—"Behold now, *Behemoth*, which I made with thee; he eateth grass as an ox; his strength is in his loins; he moveth his tail like a cedar; his bones are as strong pieces of brass and bars of iron; he lieth under the shady trees in the coolest of the reeds and fens; the willow of the brook compass him about; behold, he drinketh up a river and tasteth not." And then the alligator or crocodile—"Canst thou draw out *Leviathan* with a hook, or his tongue with a cord which thou lettest down?" and with no less truthfulness are the ostriches and pelicans of the wilderness described—"The ostrich which leaveth her eggs in the earth and warmeth them in the dust, and forgetteth that the foot may crush them, or that the wild beast may break them;" and the pelican, which was among the animals forbidden to be eaten by the Israelites. Reference is also made in the Scriptures to the ichneumon,—Pharaoh's rat,—the great enemy of the crocodile, and the sacred ibis of the Egyptians, a species of the stork which is supposed to have delivered Egypt from the plague of serpents. In fact, in speaking or writing on Natural History it is impossible not to recognise the sacred writings as a very high authority indeed. We can reach to no higher knowledge, says the venerable Humboldt, than that of which the Egyptians possessed the living germs; we can only amplify and improve.

REMINISCENCES OF A GENIUS.

A FEW years immediately prior to the celebrated battle of Waterloo, a period replete with stirring events, and remarkable for the number of illustrious men in all professions and pursuits, there flourished, in a town in the south-east of Ireland, a genius, whose natural talents, fostered by education, won the admiration and applause of all who knew him. His fame, indeed, did not extend to the ends of the earth, for modest merit ever shrinks from the public gaze; yet it reached to the utmost limits of the county in which he dwelt.

As a poet he was undoubtedly inferior to either Milton or Byron; yet he was universally acknowledged to be a superior *melodist* to Moore. Still, had not his talents been confined by the circumstances of the place in which he happened to receive his education, and his energies cramped, as too often is the case, by an imperious necessity, it must be said that no poet could have soared so high, or gone so near to heaven's gate in the sublimity of his flights. But the talent in which he excelled was music. In this his natural genius shone forth with a lustre unrivalled. If Handel had but heard him he must have stood entranced with our hero's delicious compositions; and while he listened in ecstasy, with swelling heart and tearful eye, to the rich volume of sound improvised by this heaven-taught artist, the great master of music would not have disdained to have embodied his conceptions in a far nobler production than that of his celebrated "Harmonious Blacksmith." As a vocalist the subject of these remarks surpassed his competitors by many degrees. Even Braham himself, with all his richness of voice and power of expression, could not be heard beside him. Whenever he chose to pour forth the thrilling power of his song, every other sound must of necessity be hushed, every other voice silent. Nor was it easy to know which to admire most—the brilliancy, beauty, and elegance of his execution, or the sweetness and pathos of that music which he seemed to compose at will. But this did not constitute his whole merit. His accomplishments and acquirements were so many and various, that he was the delight and admiration of every beholder, and the entertainment of every company.

We need not stop to inquire why most clever people are oddities. Whether it is that talent is scarce, or that the possessor presumes too much upon that wherein he excels—the truth, however, must be confessed, that the subject of these memoirs, like too many of the sons of genius, was a fanciful and capricious creature. If you sought the entertainment and delight you expected from his society, it was then he became sullen and morose; if you asked him to gratify you with a specimen of his vocal powers and his enchanting music, he would probably retire to his apartment as if you had given him some offence. But when the fit was over, and the sun again shone forth, then would he exert his powers, without further solicitation, and hold the attention of an entire company in breathless admiration.

Doubtless, my young readers are anxious to learn the name and lineage of such a strange yet admirable personage. His family was certainly respectable, being as old as the creation, but we never heard anything very particularly remarkable in any of his ancestors, nor, indeed, any of his name, till we met with him. There was one peculiarity, however, which we were very nearly omitting, namely, that though humble in their origin, every one of his kindred that came to maturity, invariably rose in the world, except himself, and that, singular to say, it was his superior talent which effectually put a bar to his advancement in that way. As to his name, it was humble like his birth; yet it has had talent connected with it, from Thomas Aquinas, down to Thomas Moore. His style and title was THOMAS LARK, Esq., but he was more generally known among his friends, and acquaintances, and admirers by the familiar name of "Tommy."

"And so," we think we hear our readers exclaim, "after all, it is but a poor insignificant sky-lark."

Very true, indeed; but if you had seen and heard that same sky-lark, as we and hundreds of others have, you would be delighted to make his acquaintance.

He was found in a nest in the grass by some mowers, while they were employed in cutting a meadow. He was fully feathered, and ready for his first flight, and he was brought home by the man-servant, as a present to the young ladies of a family where it was once our privilege to be an inmate. A cage was immediately procured, and a boy employed to bring a shamrock sod every morning for Tommy's pleasure and refreshment.

We need scarcely say that we are much opposed to the practice of depriving poor little animals of their natural liberty, and incarcerating them in cages, and such-like portable prisons, for the mere selfish gratification of vacant minds; and we cannot realise without horror, Sterne's picture of the captive, shut up in his solitary dungeon, counting the weary moments as they steal sluggishly along, and at the close of an almost interminable day, adding it to the number of the past on his wooden calendar. We cannot fancy, without a pang of sympathetic suffering, the wounded spirit—the hope deferred which maketh the heart sick—and the iron entering into his soul. "Disguise thyself as thou wilt, still, slavery, thou art a bitter draught." Surely, the practice we condemn must form part of that burden under which "the whole creation travaileth and groaneth together."

These remarks, however, are not called forth by anything which poor Tommy's state of confinement obliged him to endure; for the little creature seemed almost as happy as if he had enjoyed his natural liberty. He was brought from the nest before he was old enough to know what liberty was; and yet he was sufficiently old, as to no longer require the fostering care of the parent bird. A few hours more, and he would have stretched far away into the blue expanse of heaven, carolling that beautiful hymn of glory to the Creator which thrills through the heart, while it dies away on the ear, as the soaring bird disappears in the distance.

But if this was not Tommy's lot, he at least fell into kind hands, and he soon began to repay the tender and judicious care which was shown him, by a docility and tameness truly astonishing. He became familiarised to the presence of many people, by his cage being placed every day near the morning work-table of the young ladies of the family, and to that of strangers by the daily calls of visitors. At length the elder of our three young female friends ventured one day to let him out of his place of confinement; and it would appear as if the little creature was alive to the feeling of gratitude, for he seemed to recognise her in a peculiar way as his friend, and ever after treated her as if he held her in the deepest veneration and regard. Indeed, though evidently attached to every member of the family, which he pleased by a thousand endearing little ways, he yet exhibited towards each a different mode of behaviour. It now became a daily practice to permit the door of his cage to remain open, except on those occasions when it was necessary to ventilate the apartments by having any of the windows raised; and he soon began to consider it as a place of refuge, to which he always retired when anything occurred to give him offence or alarm.

When the family were assembled at breakfast, he would fly upon the table, and walk round, picking up small pieces of egg, or crumbs of bread, and sometimes he would hop up on a loaf, and actually allow a slice to be cut under his feet before he would change his position. In the course of the morning, if the ladies sat at their embroidery, or other ingenious works, at which they often amused themselves, Tommy was again permitted to leave his domicile, and on these occasions he always paid a visit to their work-table, where he delighted to play sundry droll and mischievous tricks. It was curious to see him watching the operation of threading a needle. When the thread was put ever so little into the eye, he would seize the thread and dexterously pull it through. Sometimes, when the young lady had fastened her thread to her work, and continued sewing, he would make a sudden plunge at it and pull it out of the needle again, to her great pretended vexation, while he would instantly fly out of reach and chuckle over the mischief. Sometimes he would hop on her open work-box, and seizing the end of a cotton thread,

would fly with it to the other side of the apartment, unwinding yards upon yards from the revolving spool. The second of the young ladies to whom we allude was remarkable for the elegance and neatness with which her hair was always braided. This did not escape Tommy's observation, and he frequently made an attack upon it, by taking the end of each ringlet in his bill, and, fluttering before her face, would leave it in the most admired disorder. He would then again chuckle as we have heard a magpie do after any act of mischief.

With the younger of the three young ladies, his practice was, if possible, to perch on the top of her head, and sing his beautiful song, till the music would pierce through her ears, and she was obliged to shake him off; but he never made the same attack upon her hair, though it was always becomingly settled. From the opportunity we had of watching the development of the little bird's *intellect*, we are quite convinced he understood everything that was said to him. There was a gentleman, an intimate friend of the family, who, in his repeated visits, had made himself familiar with Tommy. Whenever he made a morning call, he would say, "Ha! Tommy! good morning to you: are you ready for a game at shuttlecock?" The little creature would instantly fly to his extended hand, and suffer itself to be thrown into the air like that toy, and fall again into his hand, and so the game would continue for several minutes, until at length Tommy would fly to the ceiling, and, with his wings almost touching it, would dart with almost inconceivable rapidity from end to end of the apartment, singing at the utmost pitch of his voice that splendid melody which in his natural state the lark pours forth as he ascends above the clouds.

Another game which Tommy perfectly understood was "hide-and-go-seek," and for this he preferred as his companion the second of the "three sisters." She would say, "Now, Tommy, I am going to hide," and then drawing the room door open, she would place herself behind it, and cry, "Whoop." Tommy would immediately commence strutting up and down the floor, and stretching out his neck would peer under this, and behind that, as if he were seeking for her. At length coming opposite to where she stood, he would give a loud scream, and fly up to attack her hair. When this was over, and he had again become quiet, she would say, "Now, Tommy, it is *your* time to hide." Immediately the bird would stand still under a table, and she would commence a diligent search. "Where is Tommy? Did any one see Tommy?" In the meantime he would never give by sound or movement the least indication that he was in the room; but the moment she thought proper to find him, he would again scream, and fly up to her.

Were we to recount only the twentieth part of the many entertaining little tricks and gambols he used to exhibit, we should trespass too much on the space allotted to our biography—and, perhaps, too, on the patience of our readers. Perching sometimes on the head of the lady who first gave him his liberty, he would walk down her face as she held it up, with outspread wings, and give her a kiss! At other times he would walk round and round her, with his tail in the shape of a fan, and his wings trailing on the ground, just like a turkey-cock in miniature, warbling all the time a beautiful gentle melody in a subdued tone, and quite different from his song of the skies.

The mistress of the house, a little advanced in life, wore spectacles, which he would frequently pull off in his flights, and immediately let fall, as they were too heavy for him to carry; and after every feat of this kind, he would chuckle at his success. When the dinner things were removed, and the dessert set on the table, in the long days of summer, it was his practice to come upon the table, and going round it, would do something amusing to each person. He would bite the fingers of the master of the house, and give an exulting chuckle when he pretended to be hurt. At another gentleman's knuckles he would strike like a game-cock, and seem to be in wonderful passion. Then he would take a sudden flight at a lady's cap, and catching the end of a ribbon, would gracefully flutter before her face, carolling a snatch of a song; and again

he would visit his fair friend with the beautiful hair, and, plucking out her combs, would speedily demolish her glossy curls.

There remains, however, one trait of sagacity which those who recollect the entertaining little creature would scarcely pardon us if we omitted. The younger of the three ladies was accustomed each night before she retired to take her candle over to Tommy's cage to bid him "good night." He would instantly bring out his head from under his wing, and standing up, sing one of the most beautiful little songs you could conceive it possible for a little throat like his to warble—a song, too, that he never gave forth on any other occasion. And if she attempted to go out of the room without thus coming to bid him "good night," although his head was under his wing, and you thought him asleep, he would instantly scream out to put her in mind. To this may be added, the singular fact that he would not sing the same song for any one else who might take a candle to his cage, though he would respond by a chirp to their "good night."

It may well be imagined that a little creature so sagacious and entertaining would become very interesting, not only to the family, but to all who chanced to know him. His fame extended far and near, and many came from the remote parts of the county purposely to visit him. Even strangers made interest to be introduced to the family for the object. But it was not always on these occasions that Tommy "showed off" best. Like most pets, he was capricious; and while sometimes he would delight a large company, at others he would refuse to come out of his cage, or even notice the caresses of his own favourites. Induced by the astonishing docility and attainments of this admired and well-known pet, many persons tried the experiment of training and domesticating birds of the same species; and the result was a general lark-mania throughout the entire town. But it would not do. Whether it was that Tommy was an original genius, or that the circumstances of his education were more favourable for the development of that natural talent, we cannot say; but it is a fact, that of the numerous birds condemned to imprisonment, after his example, not one could be in the least degree tamed, or even brought to sing, in their state of confinement. And such of them as escaped from the fangs of that miniature tigress, the cat, were, after a long and hopeless trial, restored to the green fields and their native liberty.

But this rage for lark-training occasioned a sad fright to the lady of the house on Tommy's account. Returning home one day from some shopping excursion, she found a dead lark at the hall-door, and taking it up in her hand, with what feelings my amiable young readers may suppose, she rushed to the apartment where Tommy was usually kept. Her first glance at the cage showed her the pretty pet alive, safe, and well; and, throwing the dead bird on the table, it was some minutes before she recovered from her agitation.

But an accident of a serious nature occurred about this time, which occasioned great alarm in the family. Tommy was lost! The first duty of the servant, when he came in to lay the cloth for dinner, was to ascertain that the bird was in his cage, and to close him in lest he should be trodden upon. One day, however, Tommy could not be found. Search was made in every direction; inquiries sent about in all quarters. No news could be obtained that any one had seen him for the previous two hours. At length dinner was announced, and the family sat down with grieving looks and uncomfortable feelings. Many conjectures were hazarded as to what had become of the bird. Could a cat have laid her felon claws upon him, or could he have been inadvertently trodden upon? At length it was recollected that the room having been unusually close and warm that morning, one of the windows had been thrown up for ventilation. It was concluded, therefore, that poor Tommy had got out, and that, alarmed at the novelty of his situation in the open street, he had not found his way back. It was decided, therefore, that messengers should be sent out in all directions to search for the bird. Just at this moment, however, a thought occurred to the lady of the house, and, thrusting her hand to the bottom of a

capacious pocket, which, despite of the fashion, she was in the habit of wearing, she drew forth a small key, and running over to the work-table, she unlocked its drawer, and, sure enough, Tommy popped up his head with a chirp, as much as to say, "Not lost, only mislaid!" The truth happened to be, as was now recollected, that the bird had been picking at some crumbs of gingerbread in the open drawer, when the lady, hastily called away on some household message, had as hastily closed and locked the drawer, without perceiving the bird was there. Such, however, was its exceeding tameness, that, without being disturbed, it merely ducked its head as the drawer went in; and thus was poor Tommy enclosed in his temporary confinement, and forgotten, until the anxiety produced by his unaccountable disappearance led to his happy recovery.

What the duration of a lark's age usually is we cannot say. It is probable that in the natural state they do not live as long as when well taken care of in a tame condition. The frosts of winter, want of food, and other circumstances, must cut off large numbers of the older and more weakly birds. However this may be, Tommy himself lived a happy life for *thirteen* years. As he grew old, a curious complaint affected him. He cast the upper chap of his bill every season for a few years before he died. At those periods, more than usual care was necessary: he required to be fed with soft food, and he seemed in some degree to languish while the process was going on; but when the new portion of the bill had grown, and the old part was thrown off, he soon recovered his spirits, and became as entertaining as ever.

But, alas! larks must die as well as men. At length poor Tommy fell sick, and now, indeed, he lost all his energy and power of entertaining. His feathers ruffled, his head drooped, his wings hung, and his eyes grew dim. Every one suffered with poor Tommy, and there were as many messages to inquire how he did, as if it were indeed some dear friend. A humane and skilful surgeon, who was intimate in the house, and who regarded Tommy with unbounded admiration, did not disdain to visit him several times a-day, and contrived to administer medicine in homœopathic doses. But all would not do: the sympathy of attached friends, and the skill of human science, were alike unavailing. Tommy was wrapped in cotton, and placed near the genial warmth of a moderate fire—yet still he languished, and took but little notice of those around him. His young friend, for whom he used to sing his sweet "good night," approached him with her candle; he lifted his little head, and as the dying swan is said to sing, he attempted to warble his last "good night." She burst into tears, and retired. In the morning, Tommy was dead!

[This additional chapter to the "Instincts of Animals" is true in every particular.—Ed.]

THE FETE OF THE MADONNA DEL ARCO, AT NAPLES.

AT the commencement of the seventeenth century, some young men were playing at tennis in a little village some miles from Naples, near Vesuvius; one of them cried out with a sort of enthusiasm, "I'm sure to win! I prayed at the feet of that Madonna before I began to play," pointing to a little stone image in a niche, such as are found at the outside of almost all houses in Italy, "and she smiled on me." He did win, and his antagonist furious with disappointment, as he did not by any means take the Virgin's interference in good part, threw the ball at the Madonna and hit her on the cheek. The cheek instantly became black. A certain nobleman of Sarò, who chanced to be passing at the time, seized upon the sacrilegious offender and hung him on a neighbouring tree. The moment he touched the tree it withered up, as if struck by lightning. It was cut down, and a church was built over the spot where it stood, and on the high altar was placed the miraculous image, which received the name of *Madonna del Arco*. The origin of the name is unknown, neither history nor tradition has informed us whether it was the church gave the